

Conference Abstract

100 Years of Adhesives: Knowing What Sticks

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Abstract

Can you distinguish glue dating from 1890, from another developed in 1940? What happens to glue as it ages? Why does glue for plant specimens need to be “archival”? What is the best way to use this seemingly unstable substance? How was glue invented, for what uses, and with what ingredients? Is it possible that each year 40 lb (18.2 kg) of glue are used for every person in America? What do we use it for? What do I use it for!

Julie McIntosh Shapiro, Curatorial assistant and plant specimen technician from the Harvard University Herbaria, will describe the qualities of adhesives, and how they are used to affix dried plant specimens to paper in order to keep them static, relevant, and preserved for at least a century. She will roll out the history of glues, show samples of adhesives used to glue plant to paper over time, and explain where botanists come into the picture. Knowledge in the composition of these ubiquitous adhesives will provide you with the tools to hold fast.

Keywords

Herbarium specimens, adhesives, glue

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